

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

We write to express our incredible frustration as the Trump Administration, Congressional Republicans and anti-abortion state politicians continue to use this unprecedented public health crisis to restrict comprehensive reproductive health services.¹ As proud members of the first pro-choice majority in the House of Representatives, we unequivocally oppose efforts to roll back access to reproductive health services, including abortion, and underscore the role that these essential services continue to play in this global pandemic. While we are grateful for your leadership and work standing against attempts to further restrict abortion access in COVID-19 relief packages, it is critical that we continue to fight to ensure that any future relief packages reject Republican efforts to diminish access to comprehensive reproductive health care. We must ensure that all communities are able to seek the essential and time-sensitive services they need during these difficult times.

History tells us that whenever anti-abortion politicians are able to maliciously insert harmful restrictions on comprehensive reproductive health care like abortion care, they undermine access to essential care and stigmatize those in need of abortion services. We know that these restrictions disproportionately impact people with low incomes, Black, Latinx, Asian American and Pacific Islander and Native individuals, LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants and individuals with disabilities and those living at the intersections of those identities. Nobody should be denied reproductive health care simply because of who they are, where they live, their economic status, or source of insurance.

Despite the unprecedented crisis before our nation, Senate Republicans insisted on expanding the reach of the Hyde amendment in the CARES Act in an effort to punish and shame pregnant people seeking abortion care. These efforts exacerbate increased challenges for our communities as multiple states have attempted to deny access to essential, time-sensitive abortion services since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the same states that have been trying for decades to end abortion have now tried to exploit a crisis in an attempt to violate our constitutional rights, including Texas, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Ohio, Oklahoma. Banning abortion during the pandemic leads to increased costs for travel, navigating various state restrictions, and increased waiting time. These bans are designed to punish and shame people seeking abortion care and can prevent people from getting care altogether.

¹ Los Angeles Times, "Abortion during coronavirus: State bans, closed clinics, self-induced miscarriages," Molly Hennessy-Fiske, April 16, 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-04-16/abortion-during-coronavirus-state-bans-canceled-appointments-travel>

These attacks are devastating enough in a vacuum, but instead come on the heels of three years of sustained and relentless attacks by this administration on domestic and global providers of reproductive and sexual health care and the patients they serve. From decimating the essential Title X network, to discriminating against providers and organizations because they provide or advocate for abortion care, to gutting insurance coverage of abortion - these attacks have meant that it is always the person who needs the care that suffers. Family planning, sexual health services, and abortion are time-sensitive, essential health care. To take a global pandemic as an opportunity to make it even harder for families with low incomes to access the care they need is disgraceful.

As Congress continues to respond to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, we must reject any further provisions that harm access to abortion care, restrict abortion coverage, or contribute to clinics shutting their doors. These restrictions on abortion access will only further exacerbate the impact this pandemic is already placing on our most vulnerable communities. We must reject any and all efforts to undermine comprehensive reproductive health care access.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

David Trone
Member of Congress

Scott Peters
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Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Nita Lowey
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Lisa Blunt Rochester
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Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
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Sean Casten
Member of Congress

Lauren Underwood
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Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
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Gerald E. Connolly
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A. Donald McEachin
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Tony Cárdenas
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Ami Bera, M.D.
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Jason Crow
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Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Thomas R Suozzi
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress

David Price
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
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Chris Pappas
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Chellie Pingree
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Bradley S. Schneider
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Kathy Castor
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Robin L. Kelly
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Hakeem Jeffries
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Katherine Clark
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Ann Kirkpatrick
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Juan Vargas
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Max Rose
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Jimmy Panetta
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Dean Phillips
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Ro Khanna
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Cedric L. Richmond
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Rashida Tlaib
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Susan Wild
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Madeleine Dean
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Joseph P. Kennedy, III
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Eliot L. Engel
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Jerrold Nadler
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Debbie Dingell
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Grace F. Napolitano
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Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
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Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress

John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress